

Notice to Patients Regarding the Illinois Health Information Exchange and ILHIE Connect



This Notice describes how your health information may be shared electronically and your choices about sharing this information

What is the Illinois Health Information Exchange (“ILHIE”)?

Your health care providers share your health information with each other to assist in your care. The ILHIE is a statewide, secure network that uses modern technology so your providers can electronically share information about your health care. Federal and Illinois law protects your health information in both electronic and paper files.

What is an Electronic Health Record (“EHR”)?

An EHR is an electronic version of your health record that is created using computers. An EHR includes much of the same information also held in your health care provider’s paper files. Your health information is stored by your health care provider and can be accessed only by authorized users.

What is ILHIE Connect?

ILHIE Connect is a service of the ILHIE that allows your doctors, specialists, hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies, and public and private health insurance plans, including Medicaid, who are part of ILHIE Connect (“ILHIE Connect Users”) to share a summary of your electronic health information over a secure network.

Who Can Access my Health Information through ILHIE Connect and for What Purpose?

Only an authorized ILHIE Connect User who is involved in your health care can access your health information through ILHIE Connect. ILHIE Connect Users may only access your information for authorized purposes like assisting with treatment, payment and health care operations. Only authorized ILHIE Connect Users can view, update, or exchange your health information. ILHIE Connect tracks who views your health information and when.

What are the Benefits of ILHIE Connect? Why Should I Allow my Health Care Providers to Share my Health Information through ILHIE Connect?

- ILHIE Connect allows your health care providers to access an updated summary of your health information in order to gain a more complete picture of your health history. This allows your health care providers to make better and more informed decisions about your care. This may improve your safety.
- When you need care, you might not be able to give your health care provider important health information. Allowing your health care provider to access your health information through ILHIE Connect can improve the quality of your care and could save your life.
- The ability to access your health information might result in not having to repeat the same test multiple times.

What are the Risks of ILHIE Connect?

ILHIE Connect is protected by privacy and security measures to make sure your health information is private and available only to authorized ILHIE Connect Users. Like with any electronic record, there could be a breach of security. Someone who should not have your health information may get and use your information for identity theft or other illegal activities. While this could also happen with paper health records, a breach in your EHR or an error in your EHR information may affect more records or be shared with unauthorized individuals.

Where does the Health Information Shared through ILHIE Connect Come From?

Your health information comes from ILHIE Connect Users with information about you, such as your doctors, pharmacies, clinics, laboratories, hospitals, therapists, or other health care providers.

What Health Information is Shared through ILHIE Connect and what Information is not Shared?

Your health information that may be shared through ILHIE Connect may include your diagnoses, medications, allergies, laboratory and other test results, and other treatment information. Some specially protected health information is not shared through ILHIE Connect unless you give consent.

What if I have Some Health Information that I do Not Want to be Shared through ILHIE Connect?

ILHIE Connect cannot prevent specific information in your record from being shared. If you do not want some health information that a particular health care provider has about you to be shared, you can opt out with that provider to prevent that provider from sharing the health information that is held by that provider through ILHIE Connect.

Will Mental Health Treatment Records be Shared through ILHIE Connect?

Yes. Previously, you had to give consent to share your mental health information. Recently, important changes were made in Illinois law to facilitate electronic sharing of health information through ILHIE Connect. This includes sharing of mental health information. If you do not wish to have your mental health information shared through ILHIE Connect, you can opt out with your health care provider that has mental health information about you. Please note that a mental health therapist's personal notes will never be disclosed.

Will AIDS Information, Genetic Testing Information, or Sexual Assault Health Records be Shared through ILHIE Connect?

No, not unless you consent. This information is considered specially protected health information and your ILHIE Connect Users cannot share this information through ILHIE Connect without your consent, except as required by law.

Will Alcohol or Drug Treatment Health Records Be Shared through ILHIE Connect?

It depends. Under Federal and Illinois law, certain alcohol and drug abuse health care providers have restrictions on sharing your drug and alcohol abuse health records. Those providers will not be able to share the information through ILHIE Connect. Check with your provider or visit www.hie.illinois.gov for more information.

What About Patients who are Under 12 Years Old?

Parents and legal guardians of patients 11 and under can make the decision about whether the minor's health information can be shared through ILHIE Connect. Patients 12 and older must make their own decision about ILHIE Connect participation.

Do I have to Participate in ILHIE Connect?

No. Participation is voluntary. If you do not want your health information to be shared, or if your circumstances change and you no longer want to share your health information, you can opt out. Opting out of ILHIE Connect means that your health information will not be available through ILHIE Connect, even if you have a life-threatening medical emergency. If you opt-out of ILHIE Connect, information that is shared as required or permitted by law, such as public health data, can still be shared through the ILHIE.

I Want to Participate. How Can I be Included in ILHIE Connect?

In most cases, if you want your health information to be shared through ILHIE Connect, you do not need to do anything. If your health care provider has opted you out of ILHIE Connect because of specially protected health information in your record, you will need to opt in.

I do Not Want to Participate. How Do I Opt Out of ILHIE Connect?

There are two ways to opt-out of ILHIE Connect. Ask your health care provider for an "ILHIE Connect Opt-Out Form" or visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/HIE/Pages/ILHIEPatientParticipation.aspx>, then do one of the following for each health care provider with whom you want to opt out:

- ① Complete the form and give it to each of your health care providers who are ILHIE Connect Users, or
- ② Complete the form and have it signed by a notary public. Submit the notarized form to the ILHIE Authority (fax - 312-814-5073, scan or email - ILHIE.Privacy@Illinois.gov, or mail - ILHIE Authority, 100 West Randolph Street, Suite 4-750, Chicago, IL 60601.) It may take up to 3 business days after receipt by the ILHIE Authority for the restriction on the sharing of your health information to take effect.

Please Note: If you do not want any of your health information shared through ILHIE Connect, you need to submit an Opt-Out Form to each of your health care providers who are ILHIE Connect Users. Keep in mind that a provider may be an individual or an entire hospital system. Also, opting out of ILHIE Connect does not mean that you have opted out from all other health information exchanges. Ask your health care provider if they participate in other health information exchanges and if you need to complete an additional opt-out form.

I Previously Opted Out of ILHIE Connect, but I Changed My Mind. How do I Participate in ILHIE Connect?

Even if you previously submitted an "ILHIE Connect Opt-Out Form," you can change your mind and participate at any time. Ask your health care provider for an "ILHIE Connect Opt-In Form" or visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/HIE/Pages/ILHIEPatientParticipation.aspx>, then submit the completed form to each of your health care providers with whom you have opted out. In order to share all of your health information through ILHIE Connect, you will need to submit an Opt-In Form to each of your health care providers who are ILHIE Connect Users but are not sharing your health information through ILHIE Connect. Once your provider submits your completed form to the ILHIE Authority, it may take up to 3 business days after receipt for the restriction to be removed. Once you have opted in, your health information will be available through ILHIE Connect, including your health information collected from the time before you opted in.

What if I Have More Questions?

For more information about ILHIE Connect or your privacy rights, please refer to your health care provider's HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices. You may also speak to your health care provider's HIPAA Privacy Officer. Your health care provider wants you to have the information you need to make an educated choice about the way your health information is shared. For more information visit www.hie.illinois.gov, or contact the ILHIE Authority at ILHIE.Privacy@Illinois.gov